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Datum, Episcopo-Thorpiæ, 16. Calend. Septem 1683.

Edm. Diggle, S. T. P. *Reverendissimo in Christo Patri ac Dom. Dom. Archiepiscopo* Eborac. *à Sacris Domest.*

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A SERMON
AD CLERUM:
At the Visitation of the DEANE and CHAPTER there, holden the 19th. day of *November*, *Anno Dom.* 1662.

By the most Reverend Father in God

ACCEPTUS

By Divine Providence, Lord Arch-Bishop of YORK his GRACE, Primate of *England* and Metropolitan.

Preacht by *Thomas Bradley*, *D. D.* one of his late Majesties Chaplains, and Præbendary of the Church afore-said.

Canst thou stay the sweet influences of the Pleades? or loose the bands of Orion, Job 38. 31.

The Snuffers, and the Snuffe-dishes, shall be of pure Gold, Exod. 25. 38.

Yorke, Printed by *Stephen Bulkley*, and are to be sold by *Francis Mawbarne* at the Minster-Gates, 1663.
Cum Privilegio.

(2). 38.

Revel. 2. 1.

And to the Angel of the Church of Epheſus, *Write, Theſe things ſaith he, which holdeth the ſeven Starres in his right hand, and walketh in the midſt of the ſeven golden Candleſticks.*

Ver. 2. *I know thy Works*, &c.

IN the precedent Chapter, we have the Deſcription of a wonderfull Perſon, *One like unto the Son of Man, walking in the midſt of ſeven Golden Candleſticks, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a Golden Girdle*, ver. 13. *His head and his haire as white as wooll, as ſnow, and his eyes as a flame of fire*, ver. 14. *And his feet as fine braſſe, burning in a furnace: and his voyce as the ſound of many waters*, ver. 15. *&c.* which is none other, but the deſcription of *Jeſus Chriſt* the Eternall Sonne of God, in his glorious capacities of *King*, *Prieſt*, and *Prophet* of his Church. In theſe two Chapters, the ſecond and the third, are contained ſeven Epiſtles, written from him to the ſeven famous Churches of *Aſia*: To every Epiſtle there is prefixt a ſeverall Preface; and every of thoſe Prefaces taken out of ſome part of that glorious deſcription: As for inſtance; The Preface to this firſt Epiſtle, is taken out of thoſe parts of this deſcription which are found, *verſes* 13. *and* 16. Verſe the 13. *I*

saw one like unto the Sonne of Man in the midst of the seven golden Candlesticks: And in the 16. ver. *He had in his right hand seven Starrs*, thus the Description: The Preface to the Epistle thus, *Thus saith he, which holdeth in his right hand the seven Starrs, and walketh in the midst of the seven golden Candlesticks*. The Preface of the Epistle to the second Church, the Church of *Smyrna*, is taken out of those parts of the Description which are found *ver.* 11. and the 18. *ver.* the 11. thus, *I am the first and the last*: And *ver.* the 18. thus, *I was dead, and am alive*, thus the Description; the preface to the Epistle thus: *Thus saith he which is the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive*; and so of the rest: The Preface to every one of them is taken out of such part of this glorious Description, as represents Christ unto them in such a forme or posture, as is most suitable to that Churches State, or Condition, such as may adde a greater authority to the whole Epistle, such as may make the deeper impression into them, and procure the greater reverence and obedience to that which is written and contained in them. But our businesse is with the Church of *Ephesus*, the most famous of all the rest; Famous for this, that it was the Metropolis of all the rest; *Ephesus* was the Metropolis of all *Asia*: Famous for the University there, it was an University as *Athens* was, but it seems they studied much the black Art; for when by the Preaching of St. *Paul* among them, they were convinced of the vanity of those Studies, in testimony of their Repentance, *They brought their Conjuring Books, and burnt them before all men*, but first they were prized, and upon the valuation, *they came to fifty thousand pieces of silver*, Acts 19. Famous for the magnificent Temple of *Diana*, in it the statelyest Fabrique in the world, two hundred and twenty years in building, as some Histories relate;

Famous

Famous for the Preaching of St. *Paul* there, *Acts* 20. and for that Divine Epiſtle which he Wrote to that Church, inſerted in the ſacred Canon, and one of the largeſt among them, the Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*; But much more famous for this Epiſtle written unto them, more immediately from our Lord himſelf, whereof our Text is a part: Other Churches had the Honour to be written unto by the holy Apoſtles of our Lord: but this, more immediately by our Lord himſelf; for he it is which here dictates to his ſacred Penman, and amanuenſis, *John, Unto the Church of* Epheſus *write.*

So then, It was St. *Johns* Charge to write this Epiſtle; It is our Buſineſſe now to Reade it, and to conſider of the Contents of it: For not unto *Epheſus* alone; but unto us doth it belong, *Let him that hath an eare, heare what the Spirit ſaith unto the Churches*: To us therefore, as directly doth it belong, as if the Epiſtle were ſuperſcribed, To the Angel of the Church of *York*, write, *Theſe things ſaith he, that holdeth the ſeven Starrs in his right hand, and walketh in the midſt of the ſeven golden Candleſticks*: Novi opera tua, *I know thy works.*

For the opening of this Letter, at the firſt view, it divides it ſelf into theſe three Parts:

1. The Perſon to whom it is directed here, repreſented to us under the name and Notion of an Angel, *To the Angel of the Church of* Epheſus.

2. The deſcription of the Perſon, from whom it is ſent, as he is here repreſented to us in two wonderfull poſtures; 1. *Holding in his right hand ſeven Starrs.* 2. *walking in the midſt of the ſeven golden Candleſticks*; *Theſe things ſaith he, which, &c.*

3. The ſpeciall notice that he took of their ſtate and con-

condition, the carriage and behaviour of that Church, in these words, *Novi opera tua, I know thy works.*

And now, oh for the Tongue of an Angel, to speak of so Angelicall, so Heavenly a subject, *Angels, Starrs, Golden Candlesticks!* A *Chrysostome* here, to set them forth in their luster, and in their brightnesse, would well suite with such a subject; but we must doe as we may.

The Text is of *Shew-bread* all along, and that belongs properly to the Priests. And in the Tabernacle where the golden Candlestick was set, it was commanded, *That the Table there should be furnished with such Bread*; and so it is here. And that I may break to every one of you a morsell of it, and give to each of you his portion in due season: Let us take a second view of the Text in the particulars of it, branching themselves out of these more generall Parts: And here out of the first part, The Person to whom the Epistle is directed, *The Angel of the Church*, we are to consider.

1. What is meant by this Angel?
2. Who in particular this Angel was?
3. Whether under that Name he understand some one particular Person onely? or whether there were any more included under that name?
4. Why he is represented under the name and notion of an Angel? *To the Angel of the Church of* Ephesus.

Then out of the next part of the Text, The Person from whom the Epistle is sent, we are to consider out of the first part of his description, *Holding the seven Starrs in his right hand*; what? or who are meant by these seven Starrs? whether it may not be literally understood of that famous Constellation clearly visible in our Horizon, *in dorso Tauri*, called by Astronomers, the *Pleyades*; by our vulgar people, in plain English, the seven starrs? Or, if not them? then who

who? or what elſe is meant by them. And thirdly, Why repreſented under the ſimilitude of *the ſeven Starrs?* And next, What is meant by his *holding of them in his right hand?*

Then out of the next part of his Deſcription, as he is repreſented, *walking between the ſeven golden Candleſticks*, we are to enquire, VVhat theſe *golden Candleſticks* are? who they are that are repreſented by them? and why? And laſtly, what is meant by *his walking in the midſt of them?* not ſitting, nor ſtanding; but walking: *Non in angulo, ſed in medio*, in the midſt of them.

Out of the third part, The ſpeciall notice that he takes of their works; We are to conſider, what works he means, and how, and why he is ſo exact in obſerving them, and taking notice of them? All theſe things clearly offer themſelves to our conſideration and enquiry. And if I ſhould methodically, and exactly treat of them all, I might well continue my Diſcourſe as large as *Paul* did his Sermon, which he Preach't to this very Church, *Acts* 20. till Starr-light, and till we ſhould have occaſion to make uſe of theſe Candleſticks here before us, to finiſh it. But I am commanded brevity, and I will obſerve it, as well as I can, in ſo copious a ſubject as this is, in which, *Crede mihi labor eſt, non levis eſſe brevis*: But I have heard of foure ſorts of Preachers, The *Quoter*, the *Noter*, the *Taunter*, and the *Flaunter*: Amongſt all theſe, upon this account, I ſhall fall in with the ſecond ſort, I ſhall neither Taunt nor Flaunt, nor fill the Margin with Quotations; but onely note, as it were with an aſteriſme, and point with the finger at thoſe things which are moſt remarkable, *& tanquam Canis ad Nilum*, hint and away. And firſt of the Perſon unto whom this Epiſtle is directed, here repreſented to us

under the Name and Notion of an Angel, *To the Angel of the Church of* Epheſus.

Firſt, VVhat was this Angel? *Pererius* tells, and generally the current of Interpreters, that by *the Angel* here, is meant the Biſhop of the Church of *Epheſus*; *Per Angelum hunc, non alium intelligimus, quam Epiſcopum Eccleſiæ Epheſinæ*; By *the Angel* here, we underſtand none other but the Biſhop of *Epheſus*. And reaſon it ſelf ſuggeſts it, for it is clear by that which we Reade, *Acts* 20. and in the Epiſtle written by Saint *Paul* to *Timothy*, That there were many Paſtors and Teachers in that Metropoliticall Church; yet our Lord, writing unto the Church, doth not direct his Epiſtle indifferently to them all; but to one more eminent then all the reſt, one that was Superintendent over all the reſt, whom here he ſtiles, *The Angel of that Church*; though there were many *Paſtors* and *Teachers* in that great and populous City; yet they are not all indifferently ſtyled Angels, although they might all, in a way of reſemblance, be ſtyled Angels; yet not all, nor any of the reſt ὁ ἄγγελος, *the Angel*: But to this Perſon he writes as to one more eminent then all the reſt, to one that had power, authority, and juriſdiction over the reſt, whom here he ſtyleth by an Emphaſis, and κατ' ἐξοχὴν, by an excellency; ὁ ἄγγελος, *the Angel, To the Angel of the Church of* Epheſus.

Note. It appears then, there were diſtinctions, and different Orders and Degrees among the Clergy from the beginning, even under the Goſpel. In our Saviours time, there was firſt himſelf, the Prince of the Order; then the Apoſtles; then the Evangeliſts; then the ſeventy Diſciples, all Miniſters of the Goſpel. But can you imagine that all theſe were of equall Dignity in the Church? In *Ti-*

tus

tus 1. 5. Saint *Paul* authorizes *Titus, to Ordain Elders in every Church.* That the Elders were *Teaching Elders*, it appears by their Ordination. But can any man imagine, that theſe Elders Ordeined by *Titus*, and *Titus* Ordaining, and Saint *Paul* authorizing *Titus* to Ordain them, were all of an equall authority in the Church, *Ejuſdem Ordinis, ejuſdem Dignitatis, ejuſdem Poteſtatis?* Reaſon it ſelf ſpeaks the contrary; In Heaven above there is an Hierarchy: we Reade of *Angels, and Arch-Angels, &c.* And why ſhould it ſeem ſo ſtrange that there is ſuch an one here below? and that we ſhould heare of Biſhops, and Arch-Biſhops, &c. If it be uſefull in the Church Triumphant? ſurely in the Church Militant much more. So it was here in this Church of *Epheſus*, there were many Paſtors, many Prieſts, or Miniſters belonging to it, and Miniſtring in it; yet among all the reſt one more eminent then the reſt, of greater Dignity, Power, and Authority then the reſt, here ſtyled, The Angel of the Church: *To the Angel of the Church of* Epheſus.

The ſecond Quæry is, Who in particular this Angel was then Biſhop in that See: And 'tis generally noted to be *Timothy*: Sure we are, that *Timothy* was Biſhop there, and that much about this time; We have Scripture for that, in the Cloſe of the ſecond Epiſtle to *Timothy*, where *Paul* Dates, and Directs his Epiſtle thus, *The ſecond Epiſtle to* Timothy, *Ordained the firſt Biſhop of the Church of the* Epheſians, *written from* Rome, *when* Paul *was brought before* Nero *the ſecond time.* After whom, Saint *John* himſelf that writ this Epiſtle, Succeeded him in the ſame See, where he lived many years, and at laſt ended his dayes, a very old Man, and dyed in Peace in his Bed, and ſo did none of the Apoſtles, but he; all the reſt being Crowned with

with Martyrdome : For the latter of theſe, we have the Hiſtory of the Church : But for the former, we have the Canonicall Scripture it ſelf to confirm it : So that you cannot caſt Biſhops out of the Church Root and Branch, (as the cry goes among ſome of you) except you will burn your Bibles.

3. But why doth he write in the ſingular number, *To the Angel of the Church*, as to one ? VVere there no more concerned in it ? Surely yes, all the Clergy at the leaſt ; ſo *Rupertus*, *Dum ad Angelum ſcribit, ad totum Clerum ſcribit :* VVhen he writes to *the Angel*, or *Biſhop of the Church*, he *writes to the whole body of the Clergy of that Church*. *Lyra* goes further, *In Angelo Eccleſiæ, totam affatur Eccleſiam* ; In the Angel of the Church, he ſpeaks to the whole Church, however moſt eſpecially to the Paſtors and Miniſters of it. But why in the ſingular number, as to one ? but becauſe he was their Chief, he was their Governour, he had the overſight of all the reſt, he had the Charge of them, as they had of the Flock of Chriſt, and of the Congregations under him ; he was to give them their Charge, to ſet them upon their Duty, and to ſee that they did diſcharge it accordingly ; and therefore, as if they were all involved in him, and included in him, whatſoever is found good in them, is imputed unto him, and he is commended for it ; whatſoever is found reproveable in them, is charged upon him all along throughout the whole Epiſtle, and he is blamed for it. Judge you then if he, and all his Succeſſors in the like Charge, have not reaſon to look into the Carriage and Behaviour of thoſe which are ſo immediately under their Government, and under their Charge ; if they have not reaſon as their ἐπίσκοπος, ἐπισκοπεῖν, *to Overſee them, to Viſit them, to take an Account of them how they carry in their Places,*

and

and discharge their Duties in their severall Charges. Surely it is but reasonable, and necessary, that he should take an Account of others, which is to give an Account for others unto God; and such is the Case in the Text, *To the Angel of the Church* is the Epistle directed, of him is the Account required for all that are under his Charge and Government, especially his Clergy, *To the Angel of the Church of* Ephesus, *write.*

But the main thing offered out of this superscription of the Epistle to be inquired into, is this; Why it is Directed *to the Bishop?* (or who ever else are included in it) under the Name and Notion of *an Angel, To the Angel of the Church.* And Saint *Augustine* gives the Reason in a word; *Propter similitudinem,* for the likenesse that is between them, and for the many properties wherein all Bishops, Pastors, and Ministers of the Church should resemble the Angels; and the resemblances between them for which they are called by that Name, are principally these five.

1. *Propter Dignitatem,* For the Honour and Dignity that God hath put upon them; God hath Clothed them with Honour and Dignity above their Brethren, and *hath Anointed them with the Oyle of Grace and gladnesse above their fellows*; Hath Dignified them with the highest Titles that Men can be capable of, *Spirituall Fathers, Pastors, Rulers, Embassadors, Starrs, Angels,* that they may be Honourable in the Eyes of the People; it is much for his own Honour that it should be so; it is for the Honour of his Service that it should be so; it is much for the advantage of their Ministery that it should be so; it is for the Honour of the People that it should be so; and therefore hath he Commanded, that we should *account them wor-*

thy of double Honour, if not for their own ſake, yet for their works ſake, and for their Maſters ſake, we ſhould not think much to Honour them whom God doth Honour: And let them whom God hath thus Honoured, take heed they doe not diſhonour him, nor themſelves. Remember the *Item* given to *Elyes* Sonns in this very caſe; *Thoſe which Honour me, I will Honour; but thoſe that deſpiſe me, ſhall be deſpiſed*, 1 Sam. 2. 30. made good *Malach.* 2. 9.

2. *Propter Miniſtrationem*; Paſtors, and Miniſters of the Church, are called Angels, for the likeneſſe of their Miniſtration with that of the Angels: *Angels are Miniſtring Spirits, ſent out for the good of thoſe that ſhall be the Heires of ſalvation*, Heb. 1. 14. Paſtors and Miniſters are ſuch for all the world, called, commiſſionated, and ſent out for the good of thoſe that ſhall be the Heires of Salvation, to Preach unto them the Goſpel of Grace; To Publiſh and Declare unto them the Miſtery of Godlineſſe; To Proclaime the glad tydings of Salvation; To Inſtruct them in the way of Life; To Comfort, to Confirme them, to ſtrengthen them, and every way to Build them up upon their moſt holy Faith, and ſo to fit and prepare them for the Glory that is intended them: their very Name imports their Duty, *Angels, Meſſengers from God to Man*; And the Meſſage that they bring is good, 'tis εὐαγγέλιον, *good newes, tydings of Peace, and of good things: How beautifull therefore ought their very Feet to be upon the Mountains, which are ſhod with the preparation of ſuch Goſpel.*

3. Angels, *Propter Scientiam, & Sapientiam*, for their wiſedom and knowledge; Angels are wiſe, and knowing Spirits; *As an Angel of God, ſo is my Lord the King to diſcern good and evill*, ſayes the widdow of *Tekoah* to *David*, 2. Sam. 14. 17. And *verſe* the 20. *My Lord the King is Wiſe*,

wise, as an Angel of God, to know all things: Angels are wise, and knowing Spirits; such ought Pastors and Ministers of Churches to be, *wise, and Knowing: The Priests Lips must preserve Knowledge, and the people shall seek the Law at his Mouth: for he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts*, Malac. 2. 7. The *Roman* Orator was wont to say of the Lawyers House, that it was *Oraculum Civitatis*, the Oracle of the City: I am sure it ought to be so of the Divines: The Divines Residentiary House ought to be, *Oraculum Civitatis*, from whence any of the People ought to fetch Instruction, Direction, Resolution, Satisfaction in all their Doubts, and Difficulties; *Tanquam ab Oraculo*, as from an Oracle; and this requires much knowledge, wisedome, and prudence: *He must not be a Novice*, saith Saint *Paul*, 1 Tim. 3. 6. *He must be as a Steward*, saith our Saviour, *plentifully furnished, that may bring out of his Treasury things New and Old*. God will not send a Message by the Leggs of the Lame; nor make Blind men Seers, nor Dumbe men his Orators: *Ubi desinit Philosophus, ibi incipit Medicus*. It was wont to be said, *where the Philosopher ends, there the Physitian begins*: I am sure it ought to be so with the Divines: Arts and Sciences, Knowledge in the Learned Languages, Histories, and all other kinds of Humane Learning, were wont to be accounted the Stayres into the Pulpit, the Handmaids to Divinity: But how ordinary hath it been in these latter and looser Times for young Neophytes to skip over all these at one jumpe into the Pulpit, and there with great Confidence and Impudence, the onely Armour of Ignorance, to vent their own raw Fancies, or such things which they have taken up upon Trust, from such Authors as they have light upon, or what they have taken from the Mouth of their admired Teachers, by *Brachygraphie*,

Phie, and ſo Communicate them unto the people, apt to take any new Impreſſions, and fill them with varietie of Fancies and Innovations.

The fourth property wherein the Biſhops, Paſtors, and Miniſters of Churches doe reſemble the Angels, and for which they are ſo called, is, *Propter Celeritatem*, for their readineſſe, chearfulneſſe, and ſwiftneſſe in Executing the Commands of Almighty God. Angels are repreſented to us Winged, and thoſe Wings not let down, and clapt to their ſides; but raiſed up, *expanſit* and ſtretched out, to ſhew their readineſſe to execute the will of the Heavenly Father; they ſtand in his preſence, their Eye is upon him, they doe but watch for the word of Command, and preſently they are upon the Wing: They doe not goe, but runne; not runne, but fly; ſuch ſhould be our readineſſe in doing the will of our God: we muſt not runne before we be ſent; but being ſent, we muſt not linger, delay, nor make excuſes, we muſt not Drive heavily in his Service, the wheeles of our obedience, muſt be oyled with Chearfulneſſe and Alacrity, that we may move ſwiftly in all our Duties and Performances; as we dayly Pray, ſo we muſt dayly Practiſe *That his will may be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven*; and we ſee how the Angels doe his will, with winged Chearfulneſſe and Swiftneſſe; Goe thou and doe likewiſe.

The fifth reſemblance for which Biſhops, Paſtors, and Miniſters of the Church are ſtyled Angels, is, *Propter Puritatem*, for their Holineſſe and Purity: Angels are pure Creatures, ſo had they need be that ſtand in the preſence of the holy God, and are admitted ſo neer unto him, in this reſpect we muſt be as the Angels, and that upon the ſame account. *Moſes* tells *Korah*, Numb. 16. 9. *That the*

Lord

Lord had taken him neer unto him, to doe the ſervice of the Tabernacle: Even ſo we that are the Lords Prieſts ſet a part to doe the ſervice of the Tabernacle, and to Miniſter before him in holy things, are taken neer unto the Lord: And he hath ſaid, *He will be ſanctified in them that come neer him*, Levit. 10. Oh what a hateſull thing it is to God and Man, to ſee a profane perſon, polluted and beſmeared with all manner of impiety, impurity, and uncleanneſſe, to draw neer to God in holy Services, with his polluted Heart, polluted Lips, polluted Life, and polluted Hands, to pollute all that he toucheth! it is a wonder that in ſuch caſes, the holy God doth not break out upon them, to ſtrike them through with a Thunderbolt, or by Fire from Heaven avenge himſelf upon their preſumption, as he did upon *Nadab* and *Abihu*, in the like Caſe, and for the ſame Sinn, *Levit.* 10. And how hateſull it is to Man, we may perceive by that which *Ely* his Sonns are Charged with, in the ſame Caſe, 1 *Sam.* 2. 17. *You make the Lords People to abhorre the Sacrifice of the Lord.* Woe be to us, if through our profanneſſe, or irreverent handling of holy things, we make the Lords People to abhorre the Sacrifice of the Lord; take heed we handle holy things in a holy manner, that we put off our Shooes when we approach the burning Buſh, and ſtand upon holy Ground, that we waſh our Hands in innocency, before we compaſſe the Altar: All the waſhings and purifyings under the Law, did but Typically Teach us, how holy we ought to be: Our very Garments that we weare, reade unto us Lectures of holineſſe and purity. In the Conſecration of *Aaron* to the Office of the Prieſthood, among other Religious Ceremonies, it was Commanded, *That the Blood of the Sacrifice ſhould be ſprinkled upon his right Eare, and upon the Thumbe of his right Hand, and*

upon the great Toe of his right Foot; And what did all this signifie? but that the Lords Priests must be Sanctified throughout, and from Top to Toe Consecrated as holy unto the Lord. The Motto of the High-Priests Miter, was, *Holinesse to the Lord*; It should be the Motto of every one of our Hearts, our Lips, our Lives, and all our Service should Proclaime, *Holinesse to the Lord*. We are here styled *Angels*, to shew, That we should walk before the Lord even in Angelicall purity and holinesse.

We should now come to speak of the Person from whom this Epistle is sent: But by the way, we may not omit the Charge here given to Saint *John*, concerning the things to be signified unto the Church from him; and that is, To Write them down: *To the Angel of the Church of* Ephesus, *write*.

Saint *John* had been an Authentique Messenger to have delivered *Viva voce*, by word of Mouth, a Message from Christ to the Church: But Christ doth not think that sufficient, but he must Write: The Reason was, Those things that he there wrote to that Church, did concern all other Christian Churches to the worlds end, *He that hath an Eare must hearken unto them*. And therefore that they may come to the knowledge of them, it was necessary they should be written. Secondly, Things delivered by word of Mouth, and so transmitted from Mouth to Mouth by Tradition, are subject to be corrupted, misreported, to admit of Addition, Diminution, Alteration, there can be no certainty in them, but *Litera Scripta manet*. Away then with all your Popish Traditions, Anabaptisticall Revelations, Fallacious ἄγραφα, *Unwritten Verities*, as they call them, when you speak of the Canon, whereby we should be directed

rected in matters of Faith and Manners in order to our Eternall ſalvation. God hath better provided for his Church then ſo, *By giving us a more ſure word of the Prophets and Apoſtles, and our Lord himſelf, all in writing, unto which we ſhall doe well to take heed, as to the Lights ſhining in a dark place, to guide our Feet in the wayes of truth, life, and peace.*

We now come to conſider of the Perſon, from whom the Epiſtle is ſent. *Intererit multum* Davuſne *loquatur, herusne*: It adds much to the luſter and authority of that which is written, to conſider from whom it is written; And that is here, from this wonderfull Perſon deſcribed in the Text, by *Holding the ſeven Starrs in his right hand, and walking in the midſt of the ſeven Golden Candleſticks.* As the Prophet *Iſay* once askt the queſtion, *Iſay* 63. 1. *who is this that commeth from Edom, with Garments died red from Bozrah?* So here, *who is this wonderfull Perſon, which here we ſee walking in the midſt of the ſeven Golden Candleſticks? Why; It is none other but the Sonne of God, the Lord of the Candleſticks, and the owner of them, the very ſame which we ſaw before, holding the ſeven Starrs in his right hand.* But hath he no Name? *Yes*: But the Spirit thought it more fit to repreſent him here in a Glorious Viſion, to ſet him forth in ſuch a Heavenly Deſcription and Periphraſis, as might ſtrike in the Church an awfull reverence of ſo Divine a Majeſty, to *tremble at his word, and carefully to heed it*; in the promiſes, the Threatnings, the Inſtructions, the Admonitions, the Reprehenſions, and all the ſeverall diſpenſations of it, as the *word of the Mighty God, and not of Man, the King, Chiefe Prieſt, and Prophet of the Church, and one that was perpetually in the midſt of them, and had a continuall Eye upon them, and would take a ſtrict account of them*; therefore is he ſet forth not by his Name, but by a deſcription.

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In this Deſcription here, are two parts, we muſt conſider of them both in their Order: The former of them repreſents him to us, *Holding the ſeven Starrs in his right hand.* Firſt then, *what is meant by theſe ſeven Starrs?* Secondly, *what is meant by his holding of them in his right hand?* As to the firſt, It is no injury to truth to underſtand them in a Literall ſence of that famous Conſtellation in Heaven, which in a clear Night is viſible in our Horizon, *in dorſo Tauri*, which our Vulgar People call, *the ſeven Starrs*; Aſtronomers, *the Pleyades*, and by a Synechdoche, for the whole number of the Starrs in the Firmament; all which, *this wonderfull Perſon holdeth in his right hand: He telleth the number of the Starrs, and calleth them all by their Names; He Created them at the firſt; He aſſigned to them their Places in the Firmament, their Conſtellations, their Motions, their Vertues, their Influences which he can cauſe them to ſend forth when he pleaſeth, and when he pleaſeth reſtrain them: Canſt thou ſtay the ſweet Influences of the Pleyades? or binde the Bands of Orion?* thou canſts not; *But he that made them, and gave them their Influences, can.*

Aſtra regunt Homines, ſed regit aſtra Deus:

The Starrs have a ſtrong Influence upon Men, and upon the ſubſtellary Bodies: but he that made them hath a ſtronger Influence upon them; *He holdeth them in his right hand, guides them, moves them, orders them as it pleaſeth him*; and therfore *feare not the ſignes of Heaven*, Jer. 10. 2. but feare the God of Heaven; Look not ſo much at the Starrs, as at the Hand, and at him *that holdeth them in his right hand.* Thus if we underſtand theſe Starrs in a Literall ſence, the words will beare it well enough; the Expoſition is true, but not ſo genuine; 'tis ſure enough our Lord did allude unto thoſe Starrs we ſpeak of in this Expreſſion: But in the genuine Inter-

Interpretation of them, he leads us another way, to a Metaphoricall ſence, *Revel.* 1. *and the laſt*, and by theſe *ſeven Starrs*, underſtands, *the ſeven Angels of thoſe ſeven Churches*; and by thoſe Angels, *the Biſhops, and Chiefe Paſtors of thoſe Churches; and under them, all the other Miniſters, Paſtors, and Teachers, which here he ſtyleth, ſo many Starrs*: But what is it that the *Spirit would ſay unto the Churches*, by this Metaphoricall Expreſſion? Surely this is that which he would ſay,

That all Biſhops, Paſtors, and Miniſters of the Church ſhould be as Starrs in the ſeverall Churches, and Charges wherein they are ſet, and that in a ſix-fold reſemblance, for which they are there ſo ſtyled. Obſ.

1. *Propter Lucem*, for the Light that ought to be in them, and by which they ought to ſhine unto others: It is the property of the Starrs to ſhine, and to give light to the dark places of the Earth, and that in the Night time when there is moſt need of it; Remember we are Starrs, and Starrs muſt ſhine: *We are the Light of the world, and muſt not be put under a Buſhell, but ſet up on a Candleſtick, that we may give Light to all that are about us.* It is a high Teſtimony that our Saviour gave *John* the Baptiſt, *That he was a ſhining Light.* Tis ſaid of the Fathers, met in the Councell of *Nice*, that they were, *Totius Orbis Lumina*: It was ſaid of Saint *Baſil*, *That he was in his Pulpit as Thunder; and in his exemplary Converſation, as Lightning.* We muſt ſhine by our Doctrine, and ſhine by our Works, and ſhine by our Exemplary Converſation; by all theſe we muſt *ſo ſhine before Men, that they may ſee our good works*, as well as hear our good words, that ſo they may be moved, *to glorifie our Father which is in heaven.*

1. But Light without Heat, is but a kind of *Ignis fatuus*; there must be Heate within, as well as Light without, heate of Love, and heate of Zeale; *John was a shining and a burning Light*; he shin'd in his Doctrine, and exemplary life without, and he burn'd within with Love and Zeal. Remember we are Sacrificers, and those Sacrifices were ever most acceptable which were offered by fire unto the Lord; without this holy fire to quicken, and to warm us, we shall be but cold in our performances, perfunctory in our services, we shall Drive heavily in the wayes of God, and doe the work of the Lord but negligently: Zeale is the wings of the soule that lifts it up, and carries it on swiftly in holy performances, the oyle of the wheeles of our obedience that makes them run chearfully; it will put us upon all our Duties with earnestnesse, fervency, devotion, affection, and that which we doe for God, or to God, it will make us to doe it heartily and throughly; of all others we had need to be *fervent in spirit, serving the Lord*, from whose Zeal, all our People are to take Fire.

3. Starrs, *Propter Influentiam*; Bishops, Pastors, and Ministers of the Church are called *Starrs*, by reason of the influence that they have upon the people, and the Congregations depending upon them: *Radius est vehiculum lucis, caloris & influxus*; The Starrs and other Luminaries of Heaven, doe by the Rayes and Beams which they send forth, convey not onely Light and Heate, but strong influence also into the inferiour Bodies. *Canst thou stay the sweet influences of the Pleyades*, saith *Job*, speaking of those very seven Starrs unto which the Text doth allude: Even so the Pastors and Ministers of the Church, the Church-Starrs doe convey unto the people under them, strong influence, good or bad; if they be benigne Starrs, then the influence Flowing

ing from them is good, ſaving, healing, comforting, reviveing influence: But if they be malignant Starrs, the influence flowing from them muſt needs be like unto themſelves, blaſting and diſaſterous. There are ſome Aſtronomers tell us, *That unto every Creature here below in this inferiour world, there is aſſigned a* Starr, *from whoſe influence it doth receive Vigor, Life, and Vegetation:* Not much unlike the Opinion of the Papiſts, *That aſſigne to every Man borne into the world, an Angel to be his Guardian:* And of the *Manichees, which aſſigne to every ſoule a good Angel and a bad; the one drawing him to that which is good, the other to that which is evill.* I leave them to defend their own Opinions; this is ſure, That from every of us Church-Starrs, there Darts out a Beame, or a Ray, which derives influence from us, good or bad, to every ſoule that lives under our aſpect; if we prove malignant Starrs, and that influence from us be Killing, and Deſtructive, woe unto us; How many ſoules ſhall we have to anſwer for in that caſe, periſhing through us? Remember we are Starrs, ſee the *influence* which we ſend forth to thoſe that depend upon us be good *influence.*

4. *Propter Ordinem.* Biſhops, Paſtors, and Miniſters of the Churches, are ſtyled Starrs, for the *Order that is among them,* and which they ought with all due care, to keep and obſerve. *The* Starrs *in their Order fought againſt* Siſera, *Judg.* 5. We have *Siſera's* to fight againſt, and if ever we will fight proſperouſly, we muſt fight in Order. In all Order there is ſubordination, as well as Ordination; and there are Degrees, *Secundum ſub, & ſupra.* There are ſeverall Magnitudes, *and one Starr differeth from another in Glory.* The moſt Reverend Fathers in God, the Lords Arch-Biſhops, and Biſhops, they are Starrs of the firſt Magnitude.

tude. The Reverend Prelates and Dignitaries in Cathedrall Churches, they are Starrs of a second Magnitude. We Country Priests, we are Starrs too, but of a lesser size, that move in a lower Sphere; *Minores Nobiles Cœli inferioris*, the Minors of the Inferiour world; we must all be content with our Stations, and with our Standings, and every one move in that sphere in which Providence hath plac't and fixt him. Those that are of the greater Magnitudes, must not despise those that are lesser; those that are of lesser, must not envie those that are greater, but every one must move in his own sphere, every one Act in his own Place, and in that Constellation wherein he is fixt; there he must shine, and there he must send forth Light, and Heate, and Influence, and doe all the good he can: If the Starrs of Heaven should change their Courses, Crosse their Motions, and justle one with another? what must needs follow, but a *Conflagration* in Heaven? And if the Church-starrs here below, shall doe the like, they must needs threaten Combustion on Earth. If *Aarons* Bells once begin to jangle, become out of Tune, and Ring Crosse? what doe they cry, but Fire in the Church, which will soon take hold of the Kingdom too, and ruine all together? But remember we are Starrs, and we must keep our Course, move in our own sphere, and keep in Order; that's the fourth Resemblance, for which we are called Starrs.

5. The fifth is, In respect of our Fixednesse and settlement in our Charges; The Starrs in the Firmament are Fixed Starrs; those seven more particularly (unto which this Scripture seems to allude) in a famous Constellation: such should the Church-Starrs be, Fixed Starrs; *Non stellæ erraticæ, non cadentes*; Not wandring Starrs, not falling

ling Starrs, not Meteors, ſuddainly appearing, and as ſuddainly diſappearing: But fixed Starrs, ſetled in that place of the Heaven, of the Church here below, which Providence hath aſſigned unto them; and there being diſpoſed of, they muſt fix, there they muſt reſide, there they muſt ſhine, thence they muſt ſend forth their *influences*, to the enlivening, comforting, and refreſhing of all thoſe that are under their *influences*, and their *aſpect*, ſuteable to their ſeverall Poſitures, Capaſities, Priviledges, and Honours.

6. The ſixth Reſemblance between the Starrs, and the Paſtors and Miniſters of the Churches, is in their borowed Light; the iniate Light of the Starrs is but weak; the beſt Light by which they ſhine, is but mutuatitious, derived from the Sunne, the Fountain of Light: Even ſo it is with our Church-Starrs, the Light that is in us, is not our own, it is a borrowed Light *that comes down from the Father of Lights, and is derived from the Sonne of Righteouſneſſe, ariſing over us, with healing under his wings, the Fountain of Light, out of whoſe fulneſſe we all receive Grace for Grace.* And this Conſideration ſhould teach us two things. Firſt, *Humility*: Here's no ground for boaſting: Saint *Paul* pricks the Bladder of that ſwelling pride, and makes it fall, when he puts us in mind of our Poverty and Dependency, *what haſt thou, which thou haſt not received?* And if Men will be boaſting, let them boaſt of that which is their own; *The Light that we have, is not our own*, be the gifts and parts in thee never ſo great, the Light that is in thee never ſo clear, ſo illuſtrious; yet ſay of it all, as the Sonne of the Prophet did of the Axe which he let fall into the water, *Alas Maſter, it was but borrowed*; the glory of them is

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due to the Lender, not to the Borrower; to the Giver, not to the Receiver; *But of him, and from him, and by him are all these; Therefore to him be the glory of them all, for ever and ever, of him the Father, from him the Sonne, and by him the holy Ghost* are they all; *And therefore to him the Father, Sonne, and holy Ghost, in the Unity of the Trinity, be the glory of them all for evermore.* Secondly, This should teach us Charity, in the communicating of this Light to others, which is committed unto us for that very end; And therefore we are Charged with this Duty, not onely upon the account of Charity, but of Justice, and Faithfulnesse in our trust: *As every one hath received, so let him distribute, as Stewards of the manifold graces of God*: Stewards are to give Accounts, as well as to take them; and the greater their Receipts are, the greater Accounts doe they make them lyable unto. A Day will come, when it shall be said unto them, *Redde rationem Villicationis tuæ; Give an Account of thy Stewardship*: And such are we all in this Case. The Gifts that we have are not our own; they are committed to us but in trust; we Receive them to Have, but not to Hold; we must Communicate. The Starrs doe not shine to themselves; but to the inferiour world, to give Light to others, and that in the darkest times too of the Night, when there is most need of them. Such Starrs must we be, *To shine into the world: To give Light to them that sit in Darknesse, and in the shadow of Death, to guide our Feet into the wayes of Truth and Peace.* And thus you see what it is *which the Spirit would say unto the Churches*, in this *Simile*, in resembling the *Pastors and Ministers of it by the Starres.*

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But what is meant, by *Holding them in his right hand?* There are five things intimated to us in this Expreſſion.

1. The *great Care that Almighty God hath of them,* to ſecure them, to preſerve them, to protect them, *that the Sonnes of violence ſhall not come neer to touch them, or to hurt them; He that toucheth you, toucheth the Apple of mine Eye;* Who dare come ſo neer to hurt thoſe which Chriſt *holdeth in his right hand,* but his left hand will be ready to avenge them?

2. *The great Honour that he is pleaſed to doe them,* to take them ſo neer unto himſelf, as into his *right hand.* The Right hand is a place of Honour and Dignity. *Chriſt ſitteth on the right Hand of the Father. The Sheep are placed on the right Hand of Chriſt.* When *Solomon* would Honour his Mother, he cauſed a Throne to be ſet, *and her to be placed at his right Hand.* Paſtors, and Miniſters of Churches, they are on Gods right Hand, they are in his right Hand, they are there as Signets of his right Hand, as pretious Stones in his Signet, Illuſtrious and Glorious. Great is the Honour that he is pleaſed to put upon them, even here in the Church; How ſtudious ought we to be of his Honour, that hath thus honoured us, and of our own too, that we carry as becomes us in that high Relation, Calling, Dignity, Name, and Place that we beare in Gods *right Hand, that ſo we may ſit on his right Hand hereafter, in whoſe preſence is fulneſſe of joy, and at whoſe right hand are pleaſures for evermore.*

3. *The advantage that we have of being abundantly illuminated by the light of his countenance, at ſo neer a diſtance;*

ſtance; The neerer the Starrs are to the Fountain of Light, the ſtronger muſt needs be the irradiation from it, and their illumination by it: Behold, we are neer unto the Lord, *Starrs in his right Hand*; how ſtrong then muſt needs be the irradiation from ſo Glorious a Preſence, through the beams of his countenance darting upon us. It was ſaid of *Moſes*, that when he came out of the Mount, *his Face did ſhine, that the people could not look upon him for the glory of it*. Behold, we are in the Mount with God, we are taken neer unto him; the Light in us ſhould be ſo great, our Gifts and Graces ſo illuſtrious and reſplendent, that our people ſhould look upon us with dazled Eyes, in admiration of our ſpirituall excellencies; while we behold with open face the Glory of the Lord, it ſhould be our care and indeavour, and will be our happineſſe too, to be transformed into the ſame Image from Glory to Glory, and that that God, *which made the light to ſhine out of darkneſſe*, may ſhine into our Hearts, to give the light of the Glory of God, in the Face of Jeſus Chriſt.

4. By this expreſſion is intimated, *the continuall Eye that God hath upon us, to obſerve our carriage, and our behaviour in our Callings, and in our reſpective Churches and Charges*. We cannot be in *his right Hand*, but we muſt be under *his right Eye too*, and that is as a Flame of fire, not ſo much for the anger, as for the perſpicacity of it. Of all ſorts of people, and Callings amongſt men, there are none that he doth more ſtrictly obſerve, or take a more exact account of, then he doth of us. How punctually and particularly doth he Charge the *Angels of theſe ſeven Churches*, in the ſecond and third Chapters of this Book; *Thou haſt, for which I commend thee: And theſe and theſe things I*

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have against them; imagine it every one of us, as ſpoken unto our ſelves. A Day will come, when he will deale as punctually with us, as he doth here with them; In the meane time, *He knows our works, and ſees our Wayes, and our Walkings; his Flaming and Fiery Eye is upon us: Oh what manner of men ought we to be in all holy converſation and godlineſſe?* How circumſpectly ought we to walk? How exactly to order all our goings and doings, that are under the inſpection of ſo perſpicatious, ſo ſevere an Eye?

5. By this Expreſſion is intimated to us, *The Power that Almighty God hath in his Hand, and the liberty that he reſerveth unto himſelf, to diſpoſe of theſe Starrs as he pleaſeth, to hold forth this Hand, with the Starrs in it, to what part of the world he pleaſeth, and there to continue it as long as he pleaſeth, and when he pleaſeth to turn his Hand another way, even which way he pleaſeth, with the Starrs in it, to give light to them that ſit in darkneſſe, and in the ſhadow of death; and to leave the other from whom he took it, in the darkneſſe, in which at the firſt, he found them.* Beloved, theſe Starrs doe not ſhine to any place of the world, of the Church, by chance: No, not in particular Churches, there is a Providence in the diſpoſing of them. In the 16th. of the *Acts*, we have a clear evidence of it; there were three bright Starrs, faine would they have ſhined in *Aſia*, but they received a prohibition from the holy Ghoſt, *The holy Ghoſt forbad them*, ver. 6. Then *they aſſayed to ſhine into* Bithynia: *but the ſpirit ſuffered them not*, ver. 7. The Ruler, and Diſpoſer of the Starrs, had otherwiſe determined, that they ſhould *goe to Macedonia, and ſhine there; and there did this Hand hold them forth for a ſeaſon*, ver. 12. The Starrs muſt ſhine where

he will have them, and as long as he will have them, and no longer: These *seven Churches of Asia*, are an evidence of this truth at this day. Over them did Christ *hold forth this Hand, with the Starrs in it at this time, and a long while after*, untill he was weary of holding it forth: and by reason of their barrenneſſe, and unthankfulneſſe, their irreligion, and Apoſtaſie, they gave him juſt Cauſe to Complain, *That all the day long, he had ſtretched out his Arme to an unthankfull, and a gain-ſaying people; and then to what purpoſe ſhould he hold it forth there any longer?* In his wiſedom and juſtice he turned *his Hand* from them, and held it forth more *Weſtward, to the weſterne Churches*: And ſince that, more *Northward*, to theſe Parts of the world, the Inhabitants of the Iſland, the Inheritance of *Japhet*, amongſt whom we are: And now, by the bleſſing of God, we have enjoy'd the Light under them many years: But take heed, leaſt for the ſame ſinns, for which God turn'd *his Hand* from *Shem* to *Japhet*; he again remove *his Hand* from *Japhet* to *Cham*: and when he doth ſo, leaſt as upon that remove, he left *Shem* in darkneſſe; ſo upon this turne, he alſo leave us in that darkneſſe, wherein he found us. Beloved, there is an Ancient Propheſie, *Gen. 9. 27. God ſhall perſwade* Japhet, *and he ſhall dwell in the Tents of* Shem, *and* Canaan *ſhall be his ſervant.* What is meant by *Shem* there? but the Church, which was firſt Planted in thoſe *Eaſterne* Parts, which were the Habitation of *Shem*. What is meant by *Japhet's dwelling in his Tents?* but his ſucceeding of *Shem* in the Priviledges of the Church, by tranſlating the Goſpel out of theſe *Eaſterne* Parts of the world, into theſe more *weſterly* and *Northerly* Quarters of the world, which were the Lot of *Japhets* Inheritance, and in which his Poſte-

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rity ſeated themſelves, and amongſt whom we are, deſcended from him by *Gomer*. By vertue of this Promiſe are we this Day *the Church, and dwell in the Tents of* Shem. But what doe we think of *Canaan* all this while? All this while he hath been a ſervant. *But is there not a time when he ſhall ſhake off the Yoke of ſervitude? ſhall all thoſe Parts of* America *be for ever forgotten? ſhall Light never appear in them?* Me thinks I ſee *the Day-ſpring from on high, begin to viſit them*: Me thinks I ſee the Beames of the Morning Sunne, begin to breake out upon them, in the promulgation of the Goſpel in *Virginia*, one of the outward skirts of that mighty Continent: And I am confident it will (as the Sunne) ſhine forth more and more, unto the perfect Day. I doe not doubt but God hath a great people among them to be gathered, and that there will be a glorious Church amongſt them, before the Conſummation of the world: But take heed, leaſt as I intimated before, as God turning *his Hand* from *Shem* to *Japhet*, left *Shem* in darkneſſe, under which to this Day he lyes: So when God ſhall turne *his Hand, with the Starrs* in it from *Japhet* to *Cham*, or *Canaan*, he leave us alſo in the Darkeneſſe wherein at the firſt he found us, and their Sunne-riſing, be our Sunne-ſetting, our Barrenneſſe, Unfruitfulneſſe, Apoſtacy, falling from our firſt Love, our Schiſmes and Diviſions, our Hypocriſie, Formality, generall Irreligiouſneſſe and profaneneſſe, ſeem to portend and beſpeak no leſſe; preſages of it we have ſure, our Golden Candleſticks lately tottering, and ſore ſhaken, the Famous Lights in them put out, others burning in them blue, and dimly; all manner of Hereſies that ever the *Church* hath been peſtered withall Revived, Countenanced, Encouraged;

couraged; the Seamelesse Coate of Christ Torne and Rent into an hundred pieces, by Sects, Schismes, and Divisions, Factions, and Fractions; The Discipline of the Church layd by, the holy Worship despised, and trampled under foor, the Sacraments throwne out, all Ordinances, but Preaching, and Extemporary Praying cryed downe; the lowest of the people made Priests, and the Priests made the lowest of the people; the Churches turn'd into Stables, and Stables into Churches; And how much did all this come short of the *Abomination of desolation, standing in the holy place?* How neer did all this come to the execution of the judgement threatned against *Ephesus* in this Chapter, *Of removing the Candlesticks out of their places?* Well, blessed be God, they are not yet removed, they yet stand in their places, the Lights shining and burning in them, *the right Hand of the Almighty is yet stretch't forth over us, with the Starrs shining in it.* Let us be admonished by all these threatning punishments, to walk in the light of them better then ever we have done, while we have it amongst us, *as Children of the Light, to walk up to the Light, to rejoyce in it, to be thankfull for it, and to bring forth the fruit of it*: this is the best way to keep it, and to continue it among us. And thus you heare, *what it is which the Spirit saith unto the Churches, in this Metaphoricall Expression, Of holding the Starrs in his right Hand.*

It followeth now, That we consider of the next Part of the Description, *Of this wonderfull Person Christ the Sonne of God, as he is here represented, walking in the midst of the seven Golden Candlesticks.*

Not

Not to trouble you with the ſpeculations of Expoſitors upon this ſacred and miſterious number of ſeven, ſo often mentioned in this Myſticall Book, in all the Viſions which Saint *John* ſaw, *Seven Spirits, ſeven Angels, ſeven Starrs, ſeven Candleſticks, ſeven Seales, ſeven Trumpets, ſeven Heads, ſeven Hills, ſeven Vialls, ſeven Plagues*, all by *ſevens*, a ſacred and miſterious Number; and many are the Myſteries which ſome perſpicatious witts have told us of, conteyned in that Number. But to paſſe by that. Two things we have here to enquire into:

1. *what is meant by theſe Candleſticks?*
2. *what by his walking in the midſt of them?*

And for the firſt, our Lord himſelf hath Interpreted it unto our Hands, what is meant by them. In the laſt verſe of the Precedent Chapter, *The ſeven Golden Candleſticks, are the ſeven Churches*, meaning of *Aſia*. Where take up this Obſervation by the way.

That notwithſtanding there were many Corruptions in them, in Doctrine, in Worſhip, in Diſcipline, in Government, in matters both of Faith and Manners; yet our Saviour ſtill vouchſafeth them the Name of *Churches: The ſeven Candleſticks, are the ſeven Churches*. Epheſus *is fallen from her firſt love*, ver. 4. *Smyrna* had Hipocrites among them, *which ſaid, they were Jews, and were not*, ver. 9. *Pergamos* had in her, *thoſe that held the Doctrine of* Balaam, *and the Doctrine of the* Nicolaitans, *which God hated*, ver. 14. 15. Thyatyra *ſuffered that woman* Jezabel, *which called her ſelfe a Prepheteſſe, to teach, and to ſeduce men to commit Fornication, and to Eate of things ſacrifi-*

ged unto Idolls, ver. 20. Sardis *had a Name that she lived, but was dead*, Chap. 3. 1. Philadelphia *was the purest of all the rest*; yet she is Charged with her defect too, *she had but a little strength*, ver. 8. Laodicea *was neither cold nor hot, but lukewarme*; she had a high and Pharisaicall Conceipt of her self, *that she was Rich, and wanted nothing*; where our Saviour tells her, *She was Poor, and Miserable, and Blinde, and Naked*; and yet notwithstanding all this, a Church still; notwithstanding all these Defects, Corruptions, Blemishes in all the rest; yet all this did not un-Church them, all Churches still; *The seven Candlesticks are the seven Churches*; *and the seven Churches the seven Candlesticks*; nay, *Golden Candlesticks* still, for all this. It was not a little Drosse amongst them, not a little Dust, nor Rust adhering to them, that made them cease to be Candlesticks; yea, *Golden Candlesticks* still, for all this: *The seven Golden Candlesticks are the seven Churches*. Surely, Christ the Lord of the Churches, is more Charitable, more Indulgent to us in this point, then we are one to another. We have a Generation among us, I pray God they be not such a Generation as *Solomon* speaks of, *Prov.* 30. 12. *A Generation that is pure in their own Eyes, yet are not cleansed from their iniquity*: I hope the best; But such a Generation we have amongst us, which out of a high Conceit of their own transcendent purity, think themselves too good to joyne with others; others too bad to be admitted with them into Church-fellowship: Where they see any Defects, Errors, Miscarriages, though they be but personall, not Congregationall, and such as we doe no way allow of, but reprove, cry out against, lament, and bewaile, where we cannot help it; yet these men

men take ſuch offence at them, that they with-draw themſelves, ſeparate from our Congregations, un-church us, revile, reproach, rayle upon us, as Synagogues of Satan, Lymbes of Anti-Chriſt, and caſt a greater reproach upon us, then the Papiſts themſelves. But my beloved Brethren, *From what ſpirit comes this?* from that ſpirit and wiſedom which is from above, *which is firſt pure; then peaceable, gentle, eaſie to be intreated? &c.* Or, *from a ſpirit of pride, ſingularity, diſdain, vain glory, and hypocriſie?* ſurely theſe things proceed not from that ſpirit which deſcended in the likeneſſe of a Dove, in all meekneſſe and gentleneſſe; but rather that of *Boanerges*, the Sonnes of Thunder, *which called for Lightning and Fire to deſtroy, and to avenge. But if the ſame minde were in you, which was in Chriſt Jeſus*, in this Text, you would be more Charitable. He owns the Churches yet *for Candleſtickes:* Nay, for all the Ruſt, and Duſt, and Droſſe which they were Corrupted withall, for *Golden Candleſtickes: The ſeven Golden Candleſtickes are the ſeven Churches.*

But we have not yet Examined, *Why the Churches are ſet forth unto us under the Name and Notion of Candleſtickes?* Queſt.

It is certain, that in this *ſimile*, the ſpirit of God doth allude to that famous Candleſticke which was ſet up in the Tabernacle, of which we Reade *Exod.* 25. 31. From it then we muſt fetch light to underſtand what is meant by comparing the Churches to it. And herein the Apprehenſions of Expoſitors have been very luxurious in taking hold of variety of particulars, from whence Sol.

to

to rayſe ſeverall Obſervations, not impertinent, but eſpecially from theſe three things. Firſt, From the Matter and the Mettle whereof they are made. Secondly, From the Forme of them. Thirdly, From the Uſe of them. Firſt, From the Matter and the Mettall of them, thus: When Chriſt reſembles the Churches by *Golden Candleſtickes*, his meaning is, That they are, *Per ſanctitatem pura, per dona & gratias ſpiritus ſancti pretioſa, per ſinceritatem ſolida, per bona opera ſplendentia, per morum gravitatem ponderoſa, per perſecutionem probata, per obedientiam facilè ductilia, per prædicationem verbi ſonora*. By their holineſſe they are pure, by their Gifts and Graces they are pretious, by their ſincerity they are ſolid, by their wiſedom and gravity they are weighty, by the fire of temptation and perſecution they are tryed, by the Preaching of the word they ring, and give a ſound, by their charity and obedience they are eaſily drawne forth as Gold out of the Lumpe, into leafe Gold. All this From the Matter of them, and the Mettle whereof they are made. Secondly, From the Forme of them: It is obſerved, that they are erected, they look upward toward Heaven: ſuch Candleſticks ſhould the Churches be: *Erecta per rerum divinarum contemplationem; Erecta per ſpem & fidem in Chriſto ad dextram Dei in cœlo ſedent; Erecta ad lucem cœleſtem recipiendam; Erecta ad lucem illam aliis prebendam, & circumquaque communicandam*: They muſt be Candleſticks erected and tending upward, by their Contemplation of Divine things, and ſetting their Hearts and Minds on the things that are above, erected by Faith and Hope in Chriſt, ſitting at the right Hand of the Father, erected to receive the Heavenly Light from the Father of Lights; and erected, that

that it being ſet up on high in them, might the better and the farther be Communicated to others: this from the Forme of the Candleſticks. Thirdly, From the Uſe of them, and that was touch't in the laſt, to hold forth the Light: *Men doe not light a Candle to put it under a Buſhell, but to ſet up in a Candleſticke, that it may give Light to all that are in the Houſe*: Such a Candleſticke is the Church, to hold forth the Light of Truth to all her Children, called therefore, *The Pillar of Truth*, Timothy 3. 15. becauſe as the Pillar holds forth the Kings Proclamation fixt upon it, that all that are Concerned in it may take notice of it, and he that runneth may Reade it. So ſhould the Church hold forth the Truth, that it may be viſible and audible to all her Children and Members, as the Pillar doth the Proclamation, the Candleſticke the Light. What uſe is there of the Candleſticke, if there be no Candle ſet up in it? Or what uſe of the Candle, except it be lighted, that it may burne and ſhine? And that it may doe ſo, there are two things neceſſary. Firſt, That it ſhould be fed with a continuall ſupply of Oyle, or other moyſture, to nouriſh it, and to keep it burning; and good reaſon, that they, which like Candles, conſume themſelves to give light to others, ſhould from others receive that Oyle and nouriſhment which may keep them burning. Secondly, 'Tis neceſſary ſometimes that they ſhould be Topt, or Snufft: We Reade *Exodus* 25. 38. that in the Tabernacle where the Golden Candleſticke was, there were alſo *Snuffers, and Snuffe-diſhes*: What the uſe of thoſe Snuffers was,

we all know, and what that uſe of them teacheth and leads to, we may imagine : ſometimes the Candles may burne luxurioufly, and in that Caſe, 'Tis neceſſary they ſhould be ſnufft : ſometimes they may burne but dimly, being choakt, and darkened with the ſnuffe it ſelfe, and in that Caſe, 'tis fit they ſhould be ſnufft : ſometimes there may be a Theefe in the Candle, that may waſte the Oyle and nouriſhment of it, by conveying it the wrong way, and in that Caſe they may not take it ill if they be ſnufft. The Candleſticks themſelves are not ſo free from Ruſt and Duſt, but ſometimes they will ſtand in need of ſcouring, of rubbing, and of dreſſing, by Corrections, Viſitations, and wholeſome Diſcipline ; Nor doe the Lights in them burne ſo clearly, but they had need to be look't too. Are we of this ſociety ſo innocent, that we need no inſpection ? or ſo nocent, that we need to feare a Viſitation ? Are we, amongſt all Societies, ſo abſolute, ſo independent, that we have no Superintendent ? or if any, who ſhould that be, but our Chiefe Prieſt, the Angel of this Church, our Dioceſan, our Metropolitan, whoſe Presbytery we are, and to whom we have all Sworne Canonicall Obedience ? VVho but he our *Aaron*, to ſit as a Refiner, to purifie the Sonnes of *Levy* in this Society ?

But we haſte to the other Part of the Deſcription of this *Wonderfull Perſon*, as he is here repreſented to us, *Walking in the midſt of the ſeven Golden Candleſticks*. And this is the laſt Part of this his Deſcription.

And

And what is meant by this his *walking there*, Saint *Bernard* tells us, *Ambulare in medio Candelabrorum, quid est, nisi Ecclesiis semper adesse, eis delectari, eas servare, erudire, protegeri, dirigere, juvare, & eis omnibus modis advigilare*: To walke in the midst of the Golden Candlesticks, what is it, but to be ever present with the Churches, to delight in them, to direct them, to protect them, to instruct them, and by all means to Consult their good? they are all Comprehended in these foure; His Presence with them: His Delight in them: His Observation of them: And his Care for them. First, He walks in the midst of them with Delight; *Of* Syon, he hath said, *here will I dwell, for I have a delight in her*; and so he walketh in the midst of them, as a Man would doe in his Garden, for Pleasure, and for Recreation. Secondly, He walks in the midst of them, to Preserve them, and Protect them; where he is in the midst of them within, he is as a VVall of Brasse round about them without too: Nay, *As a wall of Fire*, Zachary 2. 5. not onely to Defend them within; but to Consume and burne up all them without, which shall presume to attempt to break in upon them; and so he walkes in the midst of them, as once he did in the midst of the *Fiery Furnace* for the preservation of the three Children, *Daniel* 3. 23. which he did so powerfully, that the fire in it had power to burne the Bands and Cords, with which they were bound; but not to *touch an Haire of their Heads, or a Hemme of their Garments*. Thirdly, He walkes in the midst of them, *Erudire*, to Teach, and to Instruct them, to Awe them,

and

to keep them in order; *For he is the beloved Sonne of the Father, in whom he is well pleased, whom we must Heare and Obey*, Matthew 3. 17. He the great Prophet of his Church, whom we are Commanded to Heare with a severe intimation, *by his Spirit, by his Word, and by his Pastors sent out by him*, doth he teach the Churches to the worlds end: And so he walks in the midst of them, as a Schoole-Master in the midst of his Schoole, and his Disciples or Schollers. Fourthly, He walkes in the midst of them, *To Observe them, to take notice of their Carriage, their Manners, their Order, and their Behaviour*, as appeares by the particular Charges which he gives to these severall Churches in this his Visitation, in all of them making good what in Generall he tells them, before he come to deale particularly with them, *Novi Opera tua, I know thy works*: And so he walks in the midst of them, as the Master of the Feast in the Gospel walk't in his Dining Roome, to take a View of his Guests, to see who had, and who had not on his *Wedding Garment*. And to this purpose it is observable, in what manner of Posture and Gesture he is here seen, He is seen *walking*; Not *Sedet Otiosus*, as *Bullinger* observes; not *Stat Negligens*, he doth not sit, as being Idle; He stands not still, as being negligent; but he is seen *walking*, from end to end, forward and backward, to and fro, that at every turne he might take a View, and at every step cast an Eye, that nothing done or said amongst them, may escape his Cognizance. Lastly, he is walking, *in Medio* in the midst of the Candlesticks; *Non in Angulo, non in exteriori aliqua parte*;

parte; Not in a Corner, not in some Skirt, or Outside of them: but, *In medio Candelabrorum*, in the midst of the Golden Candlesticks, that he might look over them every way; and they at an equall distance on all sides, might receive from him that Direction, Protection, Comfort, and Encouragement which is their Light and Life. The truth is, He bought them, he layd down a Price for them, which was far more pretious then Gold, his own Blood; he had need see what becomes of them, and he is to deliver them up to God the Father; he received them by weight, and he received them by tale; *Of those which thou hast given me, have I lost none*; It is his great Care that he may deliver up his full Tale, and that he may deliver them up Pure, and Bright, and Cleare, and that he may present them without spot or wrinkle; and therefore is it that he hath such a speciall Care of them, such a vigilant Eye upon them, continually resident among them, and walking in the midst of them. Oh how happy are the Churches under the inspection of such an Eye, under the Care of such a Guardian, under the Protection of such a Patron, in the Favour of such a Prince, the Teaching of such a Prophet, the Intercession and Benediction of such a Priest continually present with them, President over them, and resident among them, walking in the midst of them? and how holily ought they to carry themselves in such a Presence? how circumspectly under the Inspection of so severe an Eye? that when he shall come to visit them, as here he doth this Church, and to take an Account of them, they may give up their Ac-

count with joy, when he ſhall ſay unto them, as here to *Epheſus*, *Novi Opera tua*, *I know thy works*, they may be ſuch as they need not be aſhamed of, ſuch as may ſtand by us, and abide the tryall, ſuch as may prayſe us in the Gate, ſuch, as upon the enquiry and examination, he may approve of, and upon which we may expect the Promiſe here in this Viſitation made *Vincentibus*, *To them that over-come, to Eate of the Fruit of the Tree of Life, which is in the midſt of the Paradice of God, to Receive the White Stone, and therein the New Name Written, which none can Reade, but he that receiveth it, to be Cloathed with white Rayment, waſht in the Blood of the Lambe, and in it to follow the Lambe whither ſoever he goeth, and to be ever in his Preſence, in whoſe Preſence is fulneſſe of joy, and at whoſe Right Hand there is pleaſure for evermore*: Which the Great God of Heaven and Earth be pleaſed to admit us unto, for his ſake which *Holdeth the ſeven Starrs in his Right Hand, and walketh in the midſt of the ſeven Golden Candleſticks*; To whom be all Honour and Glory, now and for ever, *Amen*.

FINIS.

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Bp Sanderson Visitacon Serm. Matth: 15: 9.
Mr. Shipton of Afflictions
Dr. Howson Serm of ye Festivitys of ye Church
Dr. Bradlys Visitacon Serm
Cratanthorp of Predestinacon
Mr. Ranson Curs yee Moron